have been sanctioned under Grant-in-Aid Scheme while 2 projects with an outlay of Rs. 54.90 lakhs have been sanctioned under Technology Development, Extension and Training Scheme. These projects would be implemented in a period ranging from 3 to 5 years.

Pension schemes for rural poor

6526. SHRI S. AUSTIN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any high powered committee has been appointed to study possibility of pensions for the rural poor;

(b) if so, whether the formation of the committee is likely to delay and lead to grounding of the announced schemes; and

(c) by what time it is likely to submit its recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The Committee has been set up to work out the details of the National Social Assistance Scheme.

(c) The Committee has been given three months time to submit the final report.

Integrated drinking water supply and environmental sanitation projects

6527. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the States where integrated drinking water supply and environmental sanitation projects will be taken up with the assistance from foreign countries; and

(b) by what time the aforesaid projects will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI PATEL): (a) Integrated Drinking Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Projects/ projects having components of sanitation and water supply are likely to be taken up with the assistance from World Bank/ foreign countries in the State of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

(b) The anticipated period of completion of the projects varies from 3 years to 10 years. However, as the projects are yet to be finalised the perscribed time of their commencement/ completion can not be indicated.

Arsenic pollution in ground water in West Bengal

6528. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the arsenic pollution in ground water in some parts of West Bengal is increasing;

(b) if so, whether the State Government have urged Union Government to have dialogue with foreign countries to control the ground water pollution; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI PATEL): (a) No systematic survey has so far been conducted by the Government of West Bengal. However, preliminary survey indicates that six districts namely: 24 Parganas (North), 24 Parganas (South), Nadia, Burdwan, Murshidabad and Malda with population of 302. 767 lakhs are affected by arsenic pollution.

(b) and (c) The Government of West Bengal has submitted a project to the

Government of India for tackling the arsenic problem in 24 Parganas under bilateral assistance from Germany. The project was received on 27th April, 1995 and is under examination by the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission.

Involvement of Zila Parishads in the planning of Ninth Five Year Plan

6529. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made it mandatory for the involvement of Zila Parishads in over-all planning for the 9th Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the guidelines issued to State Governments in this regard; and

(c) whether such a process is already in place; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI PATEL): (a) to (c) District Planning is a separate process, different from the overall planning for the five year plan. Vide article 243 ZD of the Constitution,. the District Planning Committees will consolidate the plans prepared by the panchayats and municpalities in the district and will prepare a draft development plan for the district as a whole. Some of the elected members of the district level panchayats will be elected to the district planning committee and hence, Zila Parishads also have their role in the district planning. Finer details would follow from the States' Legislations on Panchayats and Nagar Palikas.

Letters written by MPs

6530. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL *Alias* MEEM AFZAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of letters written by the Members of Parliament to the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment during the period from 1st April, 1994 to 31st March, 1995;

(b) what is the number of letters acknowledged out of them;

(c) what is the number of letters in respect of which final replies were sent; and

(d) what is the break-up of final letters issued by the Ministry containing positive and negative replies respectively?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI PATEL): (a) to (d) During the period from 1st April, 1994 to 31st March, 1995, 334 letters from Members of Parliament were received in the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment. Out of these, 296 letters were acknowledged and final replies have already been sent in respect of 241 letters. It is not possible to classify all the final replies sent, as 'positive' or 'negative'.

Proposal to generate millions of Mandays Employment

6531. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to generate millions of mandays employment during the financial year 1995-96;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how many such mandays employment are likely to be generated in the State of Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI PATEL): (a) to (c) The employment generation target of 920.71 million mandays at all India level and 95.80 million mandays in Madhya Pradesh have